/117 cont./

628 tendency toward the independence of the next smaller parts acting on this plane and forming it -- namely, the villages.

These hostile relationships between the villages are external evidence of a centrifugal force in Waika culture seeking detach-
628 ment. The opposite tendency, the centripetal force toward bind-
574 ing the villages together, finds its expression in active intercourse
●438 for trading and visiting. These trips, which are performed with such zeal that practically every second day there is some associa-tion with another village, from or to it, can be divided into sev-
438 eral groups, according to their purpose. First, trips purely for trade take place: each village prefers to produce or procure a certain article of the material culture so that it practically has a monopoly on it. One village supplies especially fine tobacco, another is favorably located in a place where much arrow-cane grows, a third produces pots because good clay is present in the vicinity, another is the supplier of hunting dogs for the neighbor-hood, and the village closest to us naturally barters primarily with European ironware. This formation of centers for specific goods naturally favored the development of commercial traffic; the trading itself is carried out over very long periods and thus resembles a gift-exchange behind which there is a certain amount
437 of compulsion. When one knows that the partner has more objects of a kind than he justifiably needs for himself, it is requested very urgently, and the one so entreated may not refuse, if he does not want to risk enmity and war -- he can, of course, get his revenge
[182] in his own way the next time. This system successfully prevents
[557] any accumulation of capital; no Waika possesses noticeably more
[565] than his neighbor; there are no social distinctions; and consequently no vertical classes.

628 Besides trade, the transmission of news, which proceeds in the
574 form of a /118/ ceremonial conversational-singing and not in
[203] simple dialogue, is also one purpose of such trips, as are wife-
[533] seeking and courting in other villages. As a rule all these trips
[584] are made by a group of men or young people who are guests for one or at most two nights in the strange village and then, after the trading has been done, oddly enough not until the last minute

/6 cont./

101 beyond the Uraricuera and the Parima range, respectively.
114 There can no longer be any doubt about the ethnic affiliation of this population. Koch-Grünberg was already of the opinion that in the case of the Xiriâna (Schirianá) and Waiká (Waika) "it is not a matter of two different tribes, but merely of two divisions of one large nation" (25) (26). At the same place, however, the

25. Koch-Grünberg, 1922, p. 224.

26. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 290.

investigator expresses the conjecture, which was confirmed by the opinions of neighboring tribes, that the Waiká represent merely a subdivision of the Xiriâna, "with whom they live either peaceably or in bitter enmity" (25) (26) /see the footnotes above/. Their isolation from other tribes is, according to Ourique, "an example of the instinctive precaution of the race against its own deterioration and its downfall" (27).

27. Ourique, 1906, p. 24.

101 In this connection there is a significant hint by the Surára chief,
619 according to which there are two powerful tribes within the
[115] "Yanonámi nation" first the Xiriâna, who call themselves "Harateri," and secondly the Waiká, who, however, are constantly warring. All the smaller tribes are on the side of either one or the other, but at the same time are obliged to pay tribute
● [438] and render service in war (28). The Surára and Pakidái, the
[114]

28. With regard to the Xiriâna, Koch-Grünberg already mentions this vassal relationship (Koch-Grünberg, 1922, p. 226), and Métraux also refers to it (Métraux, 1948, p. 861).

chief told me further, are allies of the Xiriâna and occasionally

/6 cont./
obtain by barter clay vessels, clay plates, bows, arrows, hammocks, baskets, belts, and upper-arm ornaments (29).

29. Pottery is not practiced at all by the Surára and Pakidái, and their self-made bows, arrows, hammocks, etc. are inferior in quality to those of the Xiriána.

/7/ IV. Historical Data

At the present time, in the winter months (rainy season), April-September, the Surára live at the Cachoeira dos Índios (Ill. 2 and 3), on the upper Rio Aracá, and the Pakidái in Taraquá, on a right branch of the middle Demini. The summer months (dry season), October-March, on the other hand, the two tribes spend together in a large, open maloka, which belongs to the Surára, in the virgin forest region between the Demini and Aracá rivers. This maloka lies 70 kilometers northeast of the Cachoeira dos Índios and about 100 kilometers south of the source region of the Orinoco.

Koch-Grünberg, on his map accompanying the work Vom Roroíma zum Orinoco /From the Roroíma to the Orinoco/, showed neither the Rio Demini nor the Rio Aracá and designates this region as "unknown territory." In his text he also says, "the entire large area between Rio Negro, Rio Branco and Uraricuéra is unexplored to this day" (30). Baldus likewise points out that in this area

30. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 287.

"surprises still await the seeker of unknown tribes" (31).

31. Baldus, 1956a, p. 294.

Surára
Pakidái
Shiriana

/21 cont./

278 The strongest poison is said to be obtained from the milk of a tree which, in the language of the Surára, is called -- patemá. [824] This tree was not pointed out to me; I was told that it only grows in a very distant region. To prepare an allegedly weaker poison the milk of the -- tototó -- (Strychnos toxifera) is used.

[415] As soon as it is obtained, the particular type of milk is [413] boiled in a clay vessel. This makes it turn black, and subsequently it is painted on the arrow points by means of a wooden stick which [415] is wrapped with cotton. Special bags -- kanabó --, which are made [824] out of the leaves of the açaí palm (Euterpe oleracea Mart.) and sewed with lianas, are used for storing them. There is never anything left of the poison itself.

278 I was also told that of the tribes allied with the Xiriána only
● 438 the Surára were entrusted with the preparation of these two types of poison. All the Indians who were friendly with them, even the Xiriána, thus obtained their poisoned arrows from them by barter. The Surára chief Hewemão, however, emphasized that the detested Waiká also knew how to prepare arrow poisons, which they used [114] above all to shoot at human beings. The latter statement is confirmed by Zerries (99).

99. Zerries, 1956b, p. 151.

278 /22/ The third type of arrow poison is the weakest. It is made out of snuff powder -- epená -- (see pp.190/193, which is mixed with water and boiled. This method is also supposed to be familiar to the Pakidái and Xiriána.

Unfortunately, I could not take part in the preparation of the poisons, for, with the exception of the chief /Fig. 3 appears here/ and his brother, only a few older men are familiar with them and they are kept strictly secret even from all the other members of the tribe. The meager information about them is limited to oral statements.

Surára
Pakidái
Shiriana

/38 cont./

301
[438]

200. (cont.)
centimeters wide. She likewise designated it for me with the name nyõõmutimá and added that she had obtained it from a Xiriána woman.

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184

The four Xiriána women whom I met in the malokas of the Surára and Pakidái wore the same cords and bands on their upper arms, wrists, and legs, like all the Pusheweteri and Aramamesteri women, including the captive Karauateri girl. The latter, however, said that they had only adopted the upper-arm bands here, for in their tribes only upper-arm cords were used.

[184]

Fig. 14a-b. Upper-arm string-band of the men.

Fig. 15a-b. Upper-arm string-band of the young men.

Fig. 16a-c. Upper-arm string-band of the women.

/51 cont./

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hold, which makes it possible for them to transport substantially heavier loads without chafing themselves. This slight improve-

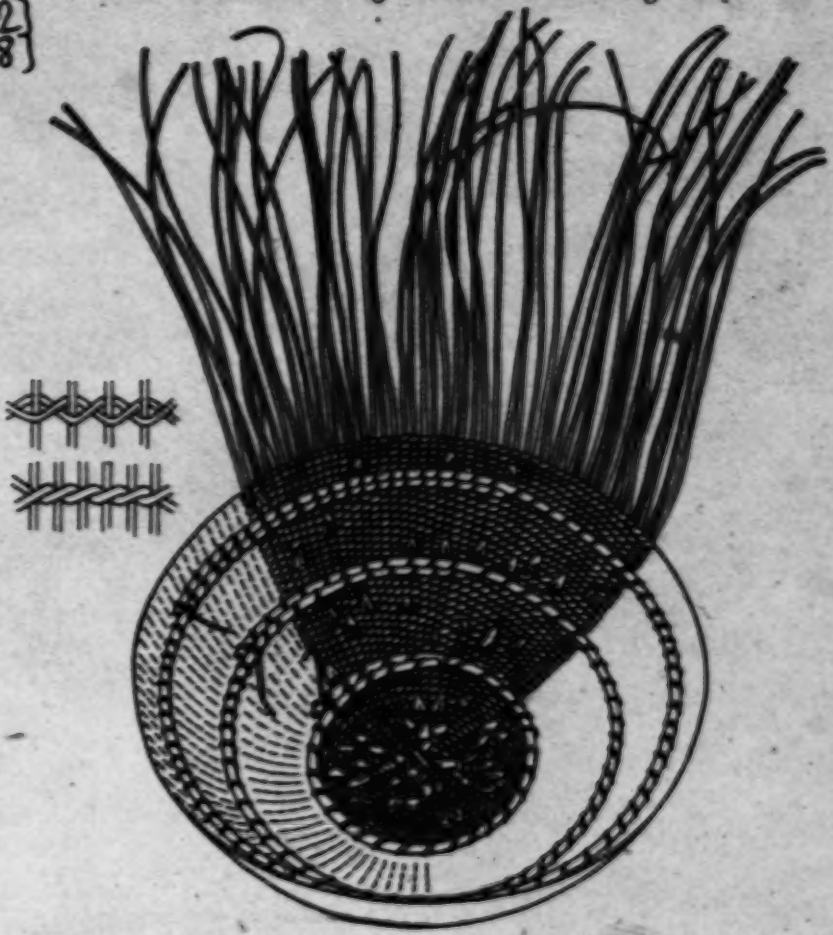

Fig. 21. Initial plaiting of a women's carrying-basket.

ment could have been developed by the Surára and Pakidái women, but the baskets themselves, as well as the method of making them, according to the statements of my informants, represent imported goods from the Xiriána.

The same applies for the round, flat basket-bowls made by the same technique, which are found in various sizes among the Xiriána (281) as well as among the Surára and Pakidái and

252 /51 cont./
184
285 The tube-press -- pokunho -- has only recently gained entry
[192] among the Surára and Pakidái. Among the former I discovered only three specimens, among the latter five, all of which /52/ /Fig. 22 appears here/ were made of bast strips of the curauá plant
• [438] (Ananas sativus Sch.) and were relatively small (length, 1.10-1.20 meters; diameter, 3-4 centimeters). They were in the possession of a few families who had obtained them by barter
[192] from the Xiriána. Heretofore the manioc pulp has been pressed out with the hand by means of small, square plaitings -- yorohí -- (290).

290. The name is practically identical with the one for the small basket with handle -- yorohikes -- and the plaiting technique is the same throughout.

[178] Even today this method is more common than the one with the tube-press, but the latter is gradually beginning to come in.
[426] Families who do not as yet own a tube-press sometimes borrow one, for up to now it has been made neither by the Surára nor the
114 Pakidái. The above reference to the fact that the tube-press is
252 supposed to represent an import article from the Xiriána is
174 significant, however. That is, when Koch-Grünberg stayed with
285 a Xiriána group in Motomotó, he did not find any there, but only small basket-winnowers, in which the manioc pulp was squeezed
[177] with the hand (291). Hence it is to be assumed that these Indians,

291. Koch-Grünberg, 1923a, p. 308.

too, have not known the tube-press for very long; presumably they took it over from the Karaiben. /Fig. 23 appears here./

Surára
Pakidai
Shiriana
Waica
Karime

/53 cont./

415 Fruits cut in two furnish correspondingly shaped bowls --
824 maraká. In order to cut them, men or women tie curauá fibers around the fresh fruit and then scratch along this with the little
[386] cutia-tooth knife (see p.117). On the inside all the bowls are given a black coating, which is made out of the charred wood of the pupunha palm and the oily yolk of turtle eggs or cayman fat.

415 A few families also have black, thick-walled, undecorated
323 clay vessels -- habokâ -- with a round bottom, which are poorly
[438] fired and break easily. I was told that they come from the Xiriâna (293),

293. The name, too, is almost the same among the latter -- "hapóga" -- (Koch-Grünberg, 1928, p. 304).

for the Surára and Pakidái do not practice pottery themselves.

323 On the other hand, this craft is also familiar to the Waiká and
184 Karimé, and, to be sure, they make vessels of the same shape as described above (294) (295). /Fig. 24 appears here./

294. Zerries, 1956a, p. 184.

295. Salathé, 1931/32, p. 302 and Fig. 12.

123 My pots and pans of aluminum, brought along as gifts, were
415 highly prized by the women of both tribes, as were empty gasoline cans and food cans.

/54/

11. Tools

412 Primitive tools, which consist of teeth, tortoise shell, bone, taquara, bamboo, and wood, are few.

[192] The most important one, and reserved exclusively for male
[237] use, is a small knife made out of the sharp tooth of the cutia (Dasyprocta aguti L.) -- tomenáke --, which every Surára and Pakidái wedges under his left upper-arm cord while traveling and on hunting and war expeditions (Ill. 31) (296). The lower part

[301]

296. The women use the cutia teeth as ear ornaments (see p. 86).

/82 cont./
252 especially of the tapir, the pieces are left on the rack until they are black and as hard as bone.

[179] Smaller pieces of meat are cooked or boiled in clay vessels (392) and occasionally also in aluminum pots (393), often

• [438] 392. These come from the Xiriâna.

[439] 393. These are trade articles of the caboclos (planters, rubber and palm-fiber gatherers) or gifts from the Indian protection post on the Rio Demini.

together with green bananas, by the women. The pot is simply set between the burning logs. The women are very enthusiastic about my empty gasoline cans, in which they often cooked a whole cutia, paca, or monkey. Snake meat is eaten only in a cooked state. Fish are wrapped in leaves and steamed in the hot ashes.

/83/ Vegetables offer a variety of possibilities in the way of preparation. Bananas are predominantly roasted in hot ashes when they are still green, after the peeling has been removed beforehand (the taste always reminded me of a fresh roll), or cut into small pieces and boiled, in the latter case usually along with meat. A soup which is made out of ripe bananas is regarded as a special delicacy (394). Bananas are seldom eaten

252
262 394. The banana in general and this soup in particular play an important role in the religious and social life of the Surára and Pakidái. Young men, during their training period as medicine-man helpers, must be satisfied with a banana as their daily diet (see p. 144). At the festival in memory of the dead such a soup, mixed with the bone ashes of deceased tribesmen, is drunk by the men (see p. 230). Young girls are permitted to eat banana soup as their sole

121 have a prescriptive marriage system. What the Purum say they do and what they actually do are two distinct things.

*621 573 922 As I mentioned above, after Yanomamö villages reach a certain, critical size, they tend to fragment into smaller groups. The internal tensions that promote this instability are to some extent offset by external military pressures: members of a faction within a larger village may want to establish their own independent village to avoid club-fighting and to suppress more severe forms of violence; but if their village is being raided by members of other villages, [241] it may be impossible for them to do so. Occasionally a village splits into several factions, each establishing its own garden apart from the other, but the factions are forced to reunite because of raids mounted by other groups. Gen- *621 *623 722 583 582 918 [502] erally, the process of village splitting precludes a later recombination of the same factions because these remain hostile to each other. Thus, the small, vulnerable villages that result from the fragmentation of a larger village are constrained to make marriage alliances with other villages, both to insure military assistance and because it is difficult to obtain women from their kinsmen with whom they are now at war. Village size and the balance of marriage exchanges between villages indicate that numerically weak villages are *621 *623 722 583 582 • 438 coerced by their stronger partners to give up women. In some cases, the disposition of desirable trade goods may affect the balance in the exchange of women between two villages. In general it may be said that, when one village

is allied to another which can provide it with more military assistance and desirable trade goods than the former can give to the latter, an imbalance in the exchanges of women will follow. The imbalance will favor the village that, for reasons of size and of existing military patterns, least needs the military aid of the other.

The character of Yanomamö warfare is not as intimately related to village size as might be expected, although, of course, larger villages are best able to conduct warfare successfully over a long period of time from one location. Larger villages are less likely to be forced to abandon their location because of raids from smaller groups, whereas smaller groups are markedly vulnerable in this respect. Nevertheless, no one village is large enough to withstand successfully military pressures from a cluster of smaller, allied villages, and, therefore, the members of all villages seek defensive alliances with their neighbors. Such alliances are based on the exchange of women.

Other demographic factors, in addition to sheer size of villages, affect marriage practices. The ratio of males to females, for example, is high, partly because of the practice of female infanticide. Moreover, the shortage of women is compounded by other factors; sexual intercourse is prohibited with pregnant women and those who have nursing children, and polygyny causes an unequal distribution of the available women. It would be difficult to exaggerate the consequences for Yanomamö social organization of this single

415 clay pots are rapidly being replaced by aluminum ware sup-
323
179 plied to the few villages in contact with foreigners. These
[137] aluminum pots enter the exchange networks and ultimately
[138] reach virtually every village, as do machetes, axes, knives, glass beads, and fishhooks.

291 Clothing for men is limited to cotton strings around the wrist, ankles, knees, and waist; the foreskin of the penis is tied to the waist string. Occasionally men wear a string around their upper torso that crosses at both the chest and the back, and a thick cotton belt, circular in
301 cross-section, around the waist. Scalps of wild turkeys are
237 worn as fore-arm bands, to which are tied clusters of feathers
[304] that dangle from a string a foot or so in length. Men perforate the lower lip and the ear lobes; they wear a small feather in the lip and short pieces of arrow cane through their ear lobes, occasionally embellished with colored
302 feathers. Both sexes cover their bodies with red pigment and shave the tops of their heads, the latter being more common
[14] among the women. The men shave the tops of their heads to
[59] display their numerous scalp wounds, evidence of fierceness in club fights.

291 Younger women wear a cotton waist band, thick cotton armbands, circular in cross-section, a harness of cotton strings on their upper torso that crosses between the breasts and at the back, and single strings around their ankles and
[304] below their knees. Women pierce their ear lobes, the corners
[301] of their mouth, lower lip, and nasal septum. Arrow shaft

595 in the family. The transfer of the woman from the older to
593 the younger brother was, in some of the cases, quite gradual. Thus, Kaobawä gave Hantoomi to his younger brother, Shadadama, because his other two wives complained about not having enough game to eat. Kaobawä continued to have sexual relationships with Hantoomi after she had become Shadadama's wife, and sired two of her children.

*629 922 936 839 Another form of permitted affair is called nohimou--"to befriend" or "act like a friend" to a woman. This type of relationship might occur, for example, when the members of a village have to take refuge with an ally. The allies invariably enter into nohimou relationships with the women of the refugees. The refugees are reluctant to give their women as wives to the men of the host village, but they are obliged to permit them to have sexual access to the women. These kinds of affairs also develop within a village between a man and the wife of a friend, or, with single girls. Again,

*629 594 438 839 836 when men go on visits to other villages and bring trade goods, they frequently are permitted to have affairs with the hosts' women, particularly if the men have brought goods that are highly prized by the hosts.

935 Incestuous affairs between classificatory siblings are quite common.[1] One of my female informants used husband

[1] Incest, to the (male ego) Yanomamö, is any sexual relationship with a member of one's lineage or with mother, mother's sister, mother's mother, and mother's sister's daughter. Failure to avoid a woman of the mother-in-law category is also incestuous in the eyes of the Yanomamö, but only if the woman is sexually active. Menopausal women of

*628 574 527 [583] [581] changes bind the villages to each other, are weak and unstable. The more frequently allies visit and feast with each other, the less likely treachery will take place, as a certain amount of trust and friendship is generated by visiting and feasting.

*628 • 438 433 The tendency for Yąnomamö villages to create artificial shortages of certain manufactured items is related to feasting and the creation of organic solidarity of a sort. After Yąnomamö villages enter into alliances, they tend to adjust their economic production of such items as bows, arrow cane, spun cotton, tobacco, baskets, cultivated drugs, dogs and clay cooking pots. Any village is capable of producing all of these goods, but allied villages create shortages of some of these items so that they can become dependent on the productivity of their allies, thereby having excuses to visit and trade.

*628 438 527 574 607 One of the most significant relationship in trading between villages is the shoriwë tie, and these men trade with each other whenever they visit. As a trade frequently involves feasting, the specialization in production of specific items leads to greater solidarity between allied villages. Although it would be an error simply to identify the role of shoriwë with that of trading partner, this aspect of the shoriwë tie, particularly between men of different villages, is by no means negligible in accounting for the solidarity this relationship promotes in inter-village political ties.

*628 438 527 574 The way the trading is conducted also contributes to

inter-village visiting and solidarity, for one trade is usually the prelude to another. For example, the Bisaasi-tedi obtain much of their spun cotton and curare arrow points from their Shamatari allies. It takes considerable time and labor to accumulate these items. When the Shamatari are visited by the Bisaasi-tedi, the latter make known their desire to have these items, and their hosts promise to produce them. When the items are accumulated, the Shamatari visit the Bisaasi-tedi to inform them their cotton and arrow points are ready. A feast is arranged and the items are given over to the Bisaasi-tedi after the celebration terminates. The Shamatari then request specific items from their hosts, and the cycle continues. Neither village is completely 'paid up' regarding goods it owes to the other, so that each exchange as Mauss (1954) argued, brings forth another.[1] The imporant point is that Yąnomamö trading is not stimulated by naturally occuring shortages or monopolies on resources; artificial shortages are created and these promote visiting between allies. In Durkheimian terms, the division of labor, irrespective of the causes, promotes organic solidarity between allied villages. And, the kinship category most intimately involved in the trading is the brother-in-law.

Affinal ties between villages, therefore, owe their

[1] The parallel between this and bride price payment in Burma is striking. See Leach, 1957. It is worth noting at this point that the Yąnomamö have no word for 'free' or 'gift'; the closest they can come to it is: "something given without cause." But nothing is given without cause, and they shrewdly keep track of all debts.

*621 613 602 562 582 583 members of his own village, Hasaböwä-tedi, who killed his father. Reromawä's group was then actively raiding Hasaböwä-tedi. The man was given a wife in Reromawä's village, the widow of a Tom man killed in the 1950-51 treacherous feast. The man's two daughters are married to Sha men.[1] The last man and his family joined Reromawä's group in 1965 to take refuge from his own villagers, the Mǫmariböwei-tedi, some of whom wanted to take his wives away from him for being brutal. He had previously given a daughter to a Tom man and when he was forced to flee from his own village, took refuge with his son-in-law. Appendix A gives more details on each individual discussed above.

*628 582 583 Lower Bisaasi-tedi has political ties with a number of villages. It has recently (since 1960) entered into alliance with two Shamatari villages, Reyaboböwei-tedi and Mǫmariböwei-tedi, and has managed to obtain a number of women from the latter village as wives for young bachelors in the group. *628 527 574 438 602 The Mǫmariböwei-tedi visit them frequently to feast and trade, and the members of Lower Bisaasi-tedi reciprocate the visits. The ties between Lower Bisaasi-tedi and the Mǫmariböwei-tedi are nearly as strong as the ties between Lower Bisaasi-tedi and any of its cognate villages to whose members the Lower Bisaasi-tedi are agnatically related. *628 602 Of the villages that are cognate to Lower Bisaasi-tedi, Monou-tedi is perhaps the most dependable ally, because the

[1] Reromawä's actual son, and Reromawä's classificatory son in Upper Bisaasi-tedi.

11: Chagnon E-5 (1964-1968) 1968 SQ18 Yanoama SQ18

black, heavy, and very brittle. It breaks easily, but the pieces are used by the men as grinding surfaces for their drug manufacture, or as baking dishes when the women make cassava bread. As we shall see below, only a few villages make the clay pots and trade them to the members of other groups.

The most distinctive feature of Yąnomamö technology is that it is very direct.[4] No tool or technique is complicated enough to require specialized labor or raw materials. Each village, therefore, can produce every item of material culture it requires from the jungle resources immediately around it. That is, the simplicity of the tools, the processes of manufacture, and the distribution of resources are such that each village can exist independently of its neighbors as far as technological requirements are concerned. Nevertheless, some specialization in trade and manufacturing does occur, but it seems to be more closely related to the development of political alliances and is therefore discussed in a later chapter. I will describe the material culture at this point and relate it to the over-all adaptation later in this and following chapters.

WEAPONS Wood for bows is obtained from two species of palm tree, one that grows wild and one that is cultivated.[5] The bow is very heavy because palm wood is extremely dense. One cannot, for example, drive a nail into palm wood. The fibers that go into the thick bowstring come from the inner bark of a tree; these are twisted into a cord by rolling them with the palm of the hand against the thigh. The cord is so strong when it is new that it can be used as a hammock rope, but it deteriorates with age and must be replaced periodically. The bow itself is shaped with the lower jaw of a large, wild pig. The canine teeth in the pig's lower mandible are worn to razor-sharp edges by chewing and make magnificent cutting tools; the bow stave is held vertically and the mandible is planed up and down the surface, each upward stroke shaving off a fine layer of wood. After much labor and patience, the bow is completed. It has a circular or oval cross section and is very difficult to draw. Most Yąnomamö bows would compare favorably to our best hunting bows in strength.

Palm wood is also used for one type of arrow point. A splinter of palm wood about 15 inches long is smoothed down to a fine point, and several lateral grooves are cut into it along its length. This is done so that the point will break off in the body of the target. This type of point is covered with curare poison, which slowly dissolves in the animal (or man) after the point has broken off. This point is used most frequently for monkey hunting, as monkeys tend to grab hold of branches and tree trunks when they are wounded. The curare relaxes their muscles, and the monkeys sooner or later fall to the ground. Unless the point were coated with curare, the animal might die high in the treetops and could not be easily recovered. The Yąnomamö also carry large supplies of extra palm points in their bamboo quivers since these points break whether or not the arrow strikes the intended target. This type of point is manufactured in large quantities in several villages and is traded to other groups.

The curare vine is also collected wild from the jungle. It is soaked in hot water to leach out the active ingredient. The water containing the poison is then painted onto the palm-wood points over glowing coals; the water evaporates, leaving a brown, sticky

[4] For more details on Yąnomamö material culture than are given here, see Becher (1960) and Zerries (1964).

[5] The cultivated palm, *pijiguao*, produces a desirable fruit. It is cultivated for the fruit, but the wood of dead palms is used in bow manufacturing.

278 layer of poison. Sometimes other ingredients are added to the poison to make it stickier and less soluble. Without these ingredients, the poison would be washed off by the rain. As an extra precaution against this, some men wrap a leaf around the curare point after it has been attached to the arrow.

415 411 [824] [438] [239] Arrow-point quivers are made from 2-inch bamboo sections of about 18 inches. The quiver is essentially a tube of wood with a natural joint serving as the bottom of the case. The bamboo grows wild in large stands, and some villages specialize in collecting it, making quivers, and trading them to other groups. A piece of monkey, snake, or jaguar skin, molded to fit over the top prevents water from getting into the tube. It usually contains a dozen or so extra arrow points, fibers for fastening the points to the arrow shaft, a ball of resin used as adhesive, a few splinters of bone used to tip one kind of arrow point, and, occasionally, a magical charm. A fiber or cotton string is tied around the bamboo tube near its top, and a loop is fashioned so that the tube can be worn around the neck. It hangs down the middle of the back.

372 [824] The Yąnomamö attach their fire drills and a pair of agouti-tooth knives to the outside of the bamboo quiver. The fire drill is made from the wood of the cocoa tree and consists of one or two 20-inch long, slender shafts, circular in cross section, and a 12-inch long lanceolate-shaped piece of cocoa wood into which have been worn several holes. The latter piece of wood is placed on the ground and held firmly in place by the foot. The tip of the slender shaft is placed into one of the holes, and the shaft is twirled rapidly with the palm of the hands; the heat of the friction ignites the wood dust that results from the spinning tip, and this is immediately transferred to some cotton tinder. The men usually work in pairs to start a fire, as the dust cools off by the time a single man can get his hands back up to the top of the slender shaft to begin another downward twirling motion.

412 [237] The agouti-tooth knives are manufactured from the lower incisor of the agouti rodent. The incisors are long, slender, gently curved, and very sharp. The tip of the incisor is shaped like a wedge and is frequently indented. The exterior part of the tooth is much harder than the pith so that a very sharp edge protrudes slightly above the softer, decayed dentine. The Yąnomamö keep the dentine worn down by periodically "sharpening" the tooth; this is accomplished by cutting into a particular kind of reed, which apparently contains a corrosive ingredient that attacks the dentine but does not affect the enamel of the tooth. The base of the tooth is fastened in a short piece of wood [314] by a resin adhesive and a fiber wrapping. The completed knife is as sharp as any steel [284] chisel, but because of its small size, its usefulness is limited. It is primarily used to whittle lanceolate arrow points from bamboo, a very time-consuming job.

226 The jungle also provides another kind of poison used by the Yąnomamö to kill fish. The men select a small stream, dam it up, and put the juice of a vine into the water. This stuns the small fish, which then float to the surface where they are scooped up by the women either by handfuls or with loosely woven, shallow baskets (see Fig. 2-2). If the woman is in the middle of the stream, she empties the contents of her basket into her hand and then stores the handful of squirming fish in her mouth until both the basket and her mouth are full. If larger fish are caught, the women bite them behind their heads to kill them and toss them out on the bank. The first one in the stream takes a chance on locating an electric eel; if she is shocked, the others try to locate the eel with sticks and kill it.

Today, however, steel tools are quite common, being provided by the several missionaries who have recently located posts at a number of locations in Yąnomamö territory. The tools that they give to their local people are eventually traded inland to more remote villages so that all the Yąnomamö, even those who have not yet had any direct contact with outsiders, now have steel tools.[7] Before the missionaries arrived, the Yąnomamö occasionally obtained steel tools from the Carib-speaking Makiritare Indians, who have long been in contact with civilization. Some of the Makiritare made periodic canoe trips in the last century as far east as Georgetown in order to obtain these tools. Kąobawä told me that when he was a young man, his village had a single piece of steel, a portion of a broken machete that came ultimately from the Makiritare Indians by way of several intermediate Yąnomamö villages. Everybody in the village used this tool when they made their gardens. It was hafted on a split stick and used as an axe. I have seen broken machetes used in this fashion in the more remote, steel-poor villages.

The Yąnomamö usually fell the big trees toward the end of the wet season, although I have seen them do it at all times of the year. In general, the clearing of the land tends to be an activity of the wet season while the burning is done during the dry season, but this schedule is by no means rigorous. An adequate burning can be achieved at the peak of the rainy season, provided that there are two days of sunshine in succession. The dead brush and the leaves of the large trees dry out rather quickly in the sun, provided that they have been lying on the ground for a sufficiently long period of time. The trunks of the large trees are never burned, so that a newly cleared garden is strewn with logs lying helter-skelter all over the cleared patch. These serve as boundaries between individual gardens, as the crops belong to the person who plants them.

Each man clears his own land. Brothers will usually clear adjacent portions of land and, if their father is still living, his garden will be among theirs. The headman of the village generally has the largest garden, as he must produce larger quantities of food; he is obliged to give food away at feasts. He can frequently enlist the aid of other men to help him make a large garden. Kąobawä, for example, is helped by a younger brother, a brother-in-law, and the latter's son. Once in a while one of his sisters who lives in a different village visits for a long stretch of time, and her son-in-law also helps Kąobawä work in the garden during these visits.

After the brush has dried out and the larger trees felled, the portable timber and brush is gathered up into piles and burned, each man having several fires going in his own patch, to which he hauls the brush as he gathers it up. Usually, the fires are built under or next to one of the larger logs. In this way the logs dry out even more completely and can be easily chopped up by the women for firewood. The ashes are not scattered to improve soil fertility.

If the new site is a great distance from the previous garden, the men will have to make numerous trips between the two sites in order to transport the plantain cuttings. If an ally's village is closer to the new garden site, some cuttings can be borrowed from his gardens, thereby reducing the transportation labor. Each mature plantain or banana plant sends out suckers which sprout a few feet away from the adult stalk. When the Yąnomamö cut the bunch of plantains or bananas from the producing plant, they also cut the entire plant down to permit the younger suckers to receive the sunlight. The larger

[7] One missionary told me that he has given the residents of his village approximately 3000 machetes over the past eight years! These are traded inland to more remote Yąnomamö.

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Another important cultivated plant is tobacco. Since men, women, and children all chew tobacco, the patch of ground devoted to its cultivation is quite large. Each family grows its own supply and jealously guards it. It is one of the most commonly stolen crops and, therefore, frequently has a conspicuous stick fence around it to draw the thief's attention to the fact that its owner shows a strong concern for its welfare. A man will even put a fence between his own tobacco and that of his father, should the two crops be planted side by side, and neither man can take a plant belonging to the other without permission. I also saw a young man place a number of sharpened bones in the ground near his tobacco patch so that a thief might suffer a serious foot wound should he trespass.

Cotton is the last plant to which major significance can be attached. The fibers are separated by hand from the seeds and spun into thread with a stick whorl, then several threads are twisted into a thick yarn. The yarn is rolled into balls about the size of a grapefruit and stored until enough has been accumulated to make a hammock. Frequently the balls of yarn are traded to the members of other villages.

The hammocks are manufactured on a crude frame consisting of two upright poles located about 6 feet from each other. The yarn is wrapped around and around the two poles until the desired width of the hammock is reached, usually about a yard, perhaps a little more. About a dozen vertical seams are braided into the horizontal strands of yarn; the poles are removed after the ends of the hammock have been tied with a few strands of cotton string, and the new hammock is completed (see Fig. 2-7). The women also use the yarn to make a short waistband, armband, and halter, and the men use it to make fat, round belts. All ages and sexes use it as a wrist, ankle, knee, and chest cord, and the men make a waist cord of the string, to which they tie their penis foreskins.

Numerous other plants are cultivated in the gardens, but are not as significant in everyday life as those discussed. They include leaf fibers, *bixa* pigment, avocados, drugs, water gourds and gourds for making spoons and ladles, a kind of squash whose seeds are eaten and whose yellow flowers are used by the young girls as decorations, sugar cane, cashew trees, papaya fruit, hot peppers, and a host of magical plants.

Most of the magical plants are associated with benevolent or at least nonmischievous functions. "Female charms" (*sua hörö*), for example, are used by men to make women more receptive to sexual advances. The dried leaves of the magical plant are mixed with a fragrant wood, and the resulting powder is said to be able to make a reluctant female hunger for sex. Most men carry a small packet of this at all times. The powder is held in the palm of the hand, which is then held firmly against the nose of the female: She is forced to breathe it into her lungs. After she has done this, she becomes very receptive, and can thereafter be easily seduced by the man who charmed her. Another magical plant is cultivated by the women. Its leaves are thrown on the men when they have club fights because it allegedly keeps their tempers under control and prevents the fight from escalating to shooting. Still other plants are cultivated to insure that male or female children grow up to be healthy adults, a different plant being associated with each sex.

Some of the plants are cultivated for malevolent purposes, such as causing the women in enemy villages to have miscarriages or pains in the back when they are preg-

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sexually active females. Some of the teen-age males have homosexual affairs with each other; the females of their own age are usually married. By the time a young man is twenty years old or so he is anxious to display his masculinity, and at that point becomes a competitor for the sexual favors of the village belles—married belles. This causes considerable friction and results in club fighting. (See Chapter 5.)

Still another factor leads to breeches of the marriage rule: chance. In some villages there are disproportionately more males (or females) of the same lineage because of the way in which the group split from a different village. Again, there may be no eligible females when a young man is old enough to marry. His only choice is to seek a wife in a different village. Rerebawä, for example, was forced into this situation. His own village is quite small (about 50 people), but it is dominated numerically by members of his own lineage. Hence, most of the females in the village are related to him as mother, sister, or daughter. The remaining females are married to his older brothers. He therefore came to Upper Bisaasi-teri—an ally of his village—to seek a wife.

Thus, political necessity, cultural practices relating to population control, unequal distribution of women, and chance combine to produce situations in which people cannot follow their prescriptive marriage rules. The factors dealing with politics are the most meaningful in explanations of the discrepancy between Yąnomamö marriage behavior and ideal models of that behavior.

POLITICAL BASIS The importance of politics can be demonstrated by citing a few incidents in the history of several villages and explaining how alliances and hostilities develop over time.

In Chapter 1 I briefly described the political milieu within which Kąobawä's village was situated. The relationships that exist at the present time make considerably more sense when they are viewed in the perspective of the historical events that led up to them. The reasons for village fissions and wars and why particular villages have entered into alliances with each other will now be explored briefly.[14]

The more important political ties currently maintained by Kąobawä's group have antecedents that go back to approximately 1940. At that time the present villages of Patanowä-teri, Monou-teri, and Upper and Lower Bisaasi-teri were one large village (see Fig. 2–8). In 1940, they were known collectively as the Patanowä-teri. To their south was a series of villages whose residents are collectively known as the Shamatari people. The Patanowä-teri were on friendly terms with most of the Shamatari and frequently visited them in order to trade. Just prior to 1940, an epidemic, probably malaria, resulted in the deaths of a number of Patanowä-teri. The Shamatari were suspected of causing the epidemic by practicing harmful magic. The first Shamatari man to visit the village after the epidemic, Ruwahiwä, was treacherous killed by a man who presently lives in Monou-teri; he bashed his head open with an axe. This immediately precipitated a war between the Patanowä-teri and several of the Shamatari villages.

A few years after the war started the Patanowä-teri fissioned into two groups: They relocated their gardens, but remained fairly close to each other geographically. This split was caused by constant bickering within the group and club fights over women. The two new villages thus formed were friendly enough to each other to live in the same

[14] I discussed these relationships in considerable detail in my doctoral dissertation, Chagnon, 1966. The following account is a simplified version.

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*628 722 241 562 581 582 The beleaguered partner may be obliged to remain in the village of his host for a year or longer, approximately the length of time required to establish a new plantation and productive base from which an independent existence is possible. Twice in the recent history of Kąobawï's group they were driven from their gardens by more powerful enemies and were forced to take refuge in the village of an ally. In each case the group remained with the ally for a year or so, moving away only after their new garden began producing. In both cases, the hosts demanded and received a number of women from Kąobawï's group without reciprocating in kind, a prerogative they exercised from their temporary position of strength. The longer the group takes advantage of a hosts' protection, the higher is the cost in terms of women, so visitors always make an attempt to establish their gardens as quickly as possible and move into them as soon as they begin producing. Without allies, therefore, the members of a village would either have to remain at their single garden and sustain the attacks of their enemies or disband into several smaller groups and join larger villages on a permanent basis, losing many of their women to their protectors. The jungle simply does not produce enough wild foods to sustain larger groups, and the threat of warfare is such that smaller groups would soon be discovered by their enemies and exterminated.

Because of the ever-present risk of being driven from one's garden, therefore, no Yąnomamö village can continue to exist as a sovereign entity without establishing alliances with other groups. Warfare is attended by a bellicose ideology which asserts that strong villages should take advantage of weaker ones and coerce them out of women; to prevent this, all villages should therefore behave as if they were strong. Thus, the military threat creates a situation in which intervillage alliance is desirable, but at the same time spawns a military ideology that inhibits the formation of such alliances: Allies need but cannot trust each other. They are obliged to behave aggressively in order to display their respective strength.

*628 • 438 574 581 582 602 Alliances between villages are the product of a developmental sequence that involves casual trading, mutual feasting, and finally the exchange of women. The most intimate allies are those who, in addition to trading and feasting, exchange women. Any developing alliance may stabilize at the trading or feasting stage without proceeding to the woman-exchange phase. These are weak alliances, but serve to limit the degree of war that might possibly obtain between the villages so related: The Yąnomamö tend to avoid attacking those villages with which they trade and feast, unless some specific incident, such as the abduction of a woman, provokes them. Allies that are linked by trade and feasting ties, for example, rarely accuse each other of practicing harmful magic. Allies bound to each other by affinal kinship ties, however, are more interdependent because they are under obligation to each other to continue to exchange women. It is, in fact, by the exchange of women that independent villages extend kinship ties to each other.

*628 562 581 582 Members of allied villages are usually reluctant to take the final step in alliance formation and cede women to their partners, for they are always worried that the latter might not reciprocate as promised. This attitude is especially conspicuous in smaller villages, for their larger partners in defense pressure them into demonstrating their solidarity by ceding women; the strong can and do coerce the weak in Yąnomamö politics. The weak, therefore, are compelled to exaggerate their strength by bluff and intimidation and by attempting in general to appear to be stronger, militarily, than they really are, thereby hoping to convince their partners that they are equals, capable of an independent

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existence. By so doing, they also inform their partners that any attempt to coerce them out of women will be met with the appropriate reaction, such as a chest-pounding duel or club fight. Nevertheless, each ally expects to gain women in the alliance and enters it with this in mind; and each hopes to gain more women than it cedes in return.

Hence, in order for an occasional nervous meeting of groups of men from different villages to evolve into a stable intervillage alliance based on the reciprocal exchange of women, the long and difficult road of feasting and trading must be traversed. Suspicion must give way to relative confidence, and this must develop into reciprocal feasting during the dry season. Only then has the intervillage relationship reached a point where the partners begin ceding women to each other; and even then, it is done reluctantly.

This is, however, only the ideal pattern in the development of an alliance. Rarely does it develop far enough to reach the stage where women change hands, particularly if the two villages concerned are of approximately the same military strength. Fights and arguments over women or food develop, and the principals withdraw temporarily on semihostile terms, perhaps attempting a rapprochement sometime in the future. Or, if the principals are obviously different military potential, the stronger of the two will coerce its weaker partner into ceding women early in the alliance development, taking advantage of its own military strength, thus altering the course of alliance development in the opposite direction.

Whatever the specific developmental sequence leading to the woman-exchange phase, the milieu within which these developments take place is not conducive to the establishment of warm ties of friendship. Each of the principals attempts to demonstrate his own sovereignty in order to convince the other that he does not really require political alliance to keep his enemies in check. This is accomplished by bragging about past military victories and fierceness in past club fights and chest-pounding duels, and by insinuating that one's group is always on the verge of exploding into a force so great that no combination of allies could overcome its terrible might. The smaller the village and more obvious its vulnerability, the greater is the pressure to insinuate or to demonstrate this potential.

Political maneuvering in this milieu is both a tricky and potentially hazardous undertaking. Each principal in the negotiation must establish the credibility of his own threats, while discovering the point at which his partner's bluff will dissolve abruptly into action; he must discover the point beyond which he must not goad his ally, lest he himself is prepared to suffer the possibly violent outcome. It is a politics of brinkmanship, a form of political behavior in which each negotiator is compelled to expose his opposite's threats as bluffs at the risk of inciting him to violence—a club fight, immediately and honorably, or, later and treacherously, a feast in which the hosts descend on their guests to kill their men and abduct their women.

Trading and Feasting in Alliance Formation

Because an ally is not beyond taking advantage of his weaker partner, especially when the alliance is just developing, there is very little in the way of natural attraction to encourage the two groups to visit each other. Considerations of pride and canons of ferocity preclude obvious attempts to develop stable and predictable alliances and military

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*628 interdependency. The Yąnomamö cannot simply arrive at the village of a potential ally and declare that they need military assistance because of the raids of a superior enemy. Doing so would admit vulnerability and perhaps invite predation from the potential ally. Instead, they conceal and subsume the true motive for the alliance in the vehicles of *trading* and *feasting*, developing these institutions over months and even years. In this manner they retain an apparent modicum of sovereignty and pride, while simultaneously attaining the true objectives: intervillage solidarity and military interdependence.

*628 438 574 (437) Three distinct features of Yąnomamö trading practices are important in the context of alliance formation. First, each item must be repaid with a different kind of item: The recipient is under an *obligation* to repay his partner in a type of exchange called *no mraiba*. Secondly, the payment is delayed, a temporal factor in the trading techniques that is likewise implied by the *no mraiba*. The consequence of these two trading features is that one trade always calls forth another and gives the members of different villages both the excuse and the opportunity to visit each other; and once the trading starts, it tends to continue, for one village in an alliance always owes the other trade goods from their last confrontation. The third significant trade feature is the peculiar specialization in the production of trade items. Each village has one or more special products that it provides to its allies. These include such items as dogs, hallucinogenic drugs (both cultivated and collected), arrow points, arrow shafts, bows, cotton yarn, cotton and vine hammocks, baskets of several varieties, clay pots, and, in the case of the several contacted villages, steel tools and aluminum pots.

This specialization in production cannot be explained in terms of the distribution of natural resources. Each village is, economically speaking, capable of self-sufficiency. (The steel tools and other products from civilization constitute the major exceptions.) The explanation of the specialization must be sought, rather, in the sociological aspects of alliance formation. Trade functions as the social catalyst, the "starting mechanism," through which mutually suspicious allies are repeatedly brought together in direct confrontation. Without these frequent contacts with neighbors, alliances would be much slower in formation and would be even more unstable once formed: A prerequisite to stable alliance is repetitive visiting and feasting, and the trading mechanism serves to bring about these visits.

*628 438 323 (114) (124) Clay pots are a good example of the specialization in labor that characterizes Yąnomamö production and trade. The Mǫ̈mariböwei-teri (see map, Fig. 2-8) are allied to both Kąobawä's group and the people of a distant Shamatari village, the latter being mortal enemies of Kąobawä. When I first began my fieldwork, I visited the Mǫ̈mariböwei-teri, specifically asking them if they knew how to make clay pots. They all vigorously denied knowledge of pot-making, explaining that they once knew how to make them but had long since forgotten. They explained that their allies, the Möwaraoba-teri, made them in quantities and provided all they needed, and therefore they did not have to make them anymore. They also added that the clay in the area of their village was not of the proper type for making pots. Later in the year their alliance with the pot makers grew cool because of a war, and their source of pots was shut off. At the same time, Kąobawä's group began asking them for clay pots. The Mǫ̈mariböwei-teri promptly responded by "remembering" how pots were made and "discovering" that the clay in their neighborhood was indeed suitable for pot manufacturing. They had merely created

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a local shortage of the item in order to have to rely on an ally for it, giving sufficient cause to visit them.

Often the specialization is less individualized than in the case of clay pot manufacture. Kaobawä's group, for example, exports cotton yarn to one ally, but imports it from another. The exported cotton frequently is brought back in the form of manufactured hammocks, the importer merely contributing labor to the process. In some cases, the shortages are merely seasonal; Kaobawä's group may import cotton from a particular ally at one time of the year, but export it at another. Most of the trade, however, involves items that are readily manufactured by or raised by any group, underscoring the fact that trade is the stimulus to visit. Food does not enter the trading system, although hospitality dictates that it must be given to friendly groups. Occasionally, a village will run short of plantains because of a particularly long hot spell, and its members may visit an ally to borrow food to last a week or so. This hospitality is usually reciprocated, but it is not a part of the trading network.

Alliances between villages may stabilize at any one of three points: sporadic reciprocal trading, mutual feasting, or reciprocal women exchange. These are cumulative levels in the sense that the third phase implies the first two: Allies that exchange women also feast and trade with each other. Likewise, allies that merely feast together also trade, but do not exchange women. At the lower end of this scale of solidarity lie those villages with which one fights to kill, while at the upper end are those villages from whom one's group has recently separated. Frequently, the scale is circular rather than linear: A village's mortal enemy is the group from which it has recently split. By way of example, Kaobawä's group trades sporadically with the Makorima-teri, Daiyari-teri, Widokaiya-teri, Mahekodo-teri, and Iyawei-teri. These are fairly weak alliances and even permit limited fighting. His group has more intimate ties with the Reyaboböwei-teri and Mõmariböwei-teri, with whom it feasts regularly. The alliance with the Reyaboböwei-teri has even reached the point at which they are exchanging women with each other. Finally, at the other end of the scale, Kaobawä's group is at war with the Iwahikoroba-teri, Möwanoba-teri, and Patanowä-teri. The first two of these groups are historically unrelated to Kaobawä's group, although they have a common history with two of his staunchest allies, the Reyaboböwei-teri and Mõmaribowei-teri, from whom they separated in the past. The Patanowä-teri are related to Kaobawä and his followers, as was shown in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, they are bitter enemies and are at present raiding each other.

Although there is no rigid geographical correlation of the village settlement pattern to the degree of alliance solidarity, neighboring villages usually are at least on trading terms and are not actively conducting war on each other. Should war develop between neighbors, one of the two principals will abandon its site and move to a new location. Whether the ties between neighboring villages will be one of blood, marriage exchange, reciprocal feasting, or casual trading depends on a large number of factors, particularly on village size, current warfare situation with respect to more distant groups, and the precise historical ties between the neighboring villages. Whatever the nature of the ties between neighbors, each strives to maintain its sovereignty and independence from the others.

The Yanomamö do not openly regard trade as a mechanism the ulterior function of which is to bring people repeatedly together, thus establishing an amicable basis from

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which more stable types of alliance can develop. Nor do they overtly acknowledge the relationships between trading and feasting cycles to village interdependency. In this regard they are like the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia: They have a "functional ignorance" of the more significant adaptive aspects of their trading institutions. To both the Yąnomamö and the Trobrianders, the mechanisms by which peoples from different groups are compelled to visit each other are ends in themselves and are not conceived to be related to the establishment of either economic or political interdependency. For the Yąnomamö participant in a feast, the feast itself has its significance in the marvelous quantities of food, the excitement of the dance, and the satisfaction of having others admire and covet the fine decorations he wears. The enchantment of the dance issues from the dancer's awareness that, for a brief moment, he is a glorious peacock that commands the admiration of his fellows, and it is his responsibility and desire to present a spectacular display of his dance steps and gawdy accouterments. In this brief, ego-building moment, each man has an opportunity to display himself, spinning and prancing about the village periphery, chest puffed out, while all watch, admire, and cheer wildly.

The hosts, too, have an opportunity to display themselves and strut before their guests. Moreover, the very fact that they have given the feast is in itself a display of affluence and surfeit apparently calculated to challenge the guests to reciprocate with an equally grandiose feast at a later date.[1] Each good feast deserves and calls forth another, and in this way allies become better acquainted with each other as they reciprocate feasts during the dry season and over the years.

Historical Background to a Particular Feast

One of the feasts I witnessed exhibited all the features of intervillage politics. Before describing this feast, I will give the historical antecedents to the event, recapitulating a number of points discussed in Chapter 3 in the context of the history of Kąobawä's village. The significance of the events will then become clear, for Kąobawä's prior relationships to the guests at the feast had a great deal to do with the outcome.

In 1950 Kąobawä's group, almost friendless, beleaguered by enemies, and somewhat isolated, began cultivating an alliance with the Iwahikoroba-teri (see map, Fig. 2–8), a Shamatari village, some two days' traveling distance southeast of their own village at Kreiböwei. The Iwahikoroba-teri were on friendly terms with another Shamatari group, the Möwaraoba-teri, from whom they had separated some years before. Kąobawä's group, on the other hand, was at war with this village because members of his own group murdered a friendly Möwaraoba-teri visitor in 1940, touching off a series of raids between them. Anxious to develop an alliance, Kąobawä's group accepted a feast invitation from the Iwahikoroba-teri and visited that village to participate in the feast. Up to that point they were only on trading terms with them.

The Iwahikoroba-teri, however, had made a prior arrangement with their friends, the Möwaraoba-teri, to help them massacre Kąobawä's men and abduct his group's women. The Möwaraoba-teri were hidden in the jungle outside the village when Kąo-

[1] The competitive aspects of feasting in many primitive societies has been dealt with at length by Marcel Mauss, whose essay *The Gift* is now an anthropological classic.

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628 begun cultivating an alliance with a third Shamatari group, one that was related to the two that conducted the massacre in 1950. The new Shamatari group, Patanishiwä-teri (see map, Fig. 2-8), was at war with the Iwahikoroba-teri, but on feasting terms with the 628 Mõwaroba-teri. Kaobawä's group persuaded their new Shamatari allies to invite the 574 Mõwaroba-teri to a feast and planned a massacre similar to that of 1950, but with the 726 tables reversed: Kaobawä's group would lie in ambush, while the Patanishiwä-teri attacked the guests within the village. The Mõwaroba-teri were being ravished by a malaria [131] epidemic at this time, and only a handful of them actually came to the feast: The others were too sick to travel. With the aid of their newly found allies, Kaobawä's group managed to kill three of the five men and abducted four of their women. The other two visitors escaped to tell of the treachery. This revenge feast was only considered to be partially successful, and Kaobawä's group was not satisfied with the outcome. Their Shamatari allies, Patanishiwä-teri, were obliged to abandon their site to avoid the revenge raids, splitting into two groups in the process: Mõmarõbõwei-teri and Reyabobõwei-teri, both continuing to remain friendly to Kaobawä's group.

628 In early 1965, just a few months after I began my fieldwork, Kaobawä and his
574 supporters left to visit Reyabobõwei-teri, one of the two Shamatari allies, hoping to
726 combine another ambuscade from the Mõwaroba-teri. They left a few men behind
123 to protect the women and children. The men were gone almost two weeks. All during this time, those who remained behind flocked to my mud hut at dawn and remained in it the whole day, not permitting me to leave. Every hour or so they asked to see my shotgun. I soon discovered that they were frightened and suspected that the Widokaiya-teri were going to raid them to abduct women, for they knew of the plot. My hut lay on the path most likely to be taken by Widokaiya-teri raiders, and the few remaining men stood guard next to my door, hoping to intercept the raiders should they attack at night.

I, unknowingly, guarded the women and children by day with my shotgun, while the men did the same at night with their own weapons. This incident indelibly underscores the almost complete lack of trust between allies; the members of Kaobawä's group expected a raid from their friends and allies rather than from their enemies!

About ten days after the men had left, six visitors from another allied village [138] passed through Upper Bisaasi-teri hoping to trade. It was obvious to them that the men [803] were away and that the women were frightened. They carried word of the situation up the Orinoco River to their own allies, one of which was the Mahekodo-teri.

The evening before the men returned from their trip, one of the Salesian Mission- [799] aries, Padre Luiz Cocco, visited me, having traveled up the Orinoco River by dark—a dangerous undertaking at that time of the year. Padre Cocco had just received word by short-wave radio from the mission at Mahekodo-teri that a large party of men had left for Bisaasi-teri intent on capturing women. They had learned of the poorly guarded women from the six visitors and were determined to take advantage of the situation.

My house was full of women and children at dawn the following day, and the raiders were probably en route. I was in a difficult situation. On the one hand, if I told the Indians of the rumor, it would have been sufficient cause to start a war between Kaobawä's group and the Mahekodo-teri. This would have been most unfortunate if the story proved to be false. On the other hand, I dared not remain silent. If raiders were indeed coming, they would probably kill the defenders to capture the women. Fortunately, Kaobawä and the men returned early in the afternoon, and I was able to remain

the visiting dancers entered, pranced around the village periphery, wildly showing off their decorations and weapons and then returning to the group. Each dancer had unique decorations and a unique dance step, something personal that he could exhibit. He would burst into the village screaming a memorized phrase, wheel and spin, stop in his tracks, dance in place, throw his weapons down, pick them up again, aim them at the line of hosts with a wild expression on his face, prance ahead a few steps, repeat his performance, and continue on around the village in this manner, while the hosts cheered wildly. When everyone had had an individual turn, the entire group entered, danced single file around the periphery several times, and gathered at the center of the clearing, where they formed a tightly knit group. They stood motionless, except for the heaving of their chests, holding their weapons vertically. After they had stood there a few moments—in a final display of decorations—Kaobawã's followers emerged from their houses and approached the center of the village, each man inviting one or more of the visitors to his house, leading him away from the village center by the arm. As each visitor was led away, his family, watching from the village entrance, unceremoniously joined him at the host's house, bringing the family possessions along. Within a few minutes the dance plaza was deserted and the visitors were resting comfortably in their hosts' hammocks. Even in the hammocks, the Yąnomamõ visitors are able to put on a silent display of their finery as they lay with their legs crossed, one arm behind their head, staring at the ceiling, waiting for their hosts to finish their ripe plantain soup from the back room[s]. [illegible] are strutting from a reclining position.

After the guests had been given their first round of soup, the men of Kaobawã's village assembled outside the entrance and came in to dance around the village for their guests. They, too, had an opportunity to put on a display of their own decorations, after which they retired to entertain the guests.

There were three troughs full of soup in the village. The first one was emptied in the process of bringing numerous gourdsful to the some one hundred visitors (see Fig. 4-2). After they had consumed this, the guests then assembled at the second trough and began eating there. Before this trough was finished, they moved as a group to the third trough and repeated their ceremonial consumpeion, before returning to their hammocks to rest and regain their appetites. Approximately two hours had passed from the time the first dancers entered the village until the guests retired from the third trough of soup. They had not yet eaten all of the contents—all in all, some 95 gallons of it—but managed to do so by morning.[6]

Shortly after dark the marathon chanting (*waiyamou*) began—it continued until dawn. At dawn the visitors conducted their trade and were given the baskets of "going-home food": boiled green plantains with smoked meat. The women and children departed with the food, leaving the men behind to trade. The visitors made requests through their headman, and Kaobawã would produce the item by enjoining one of the local men to give it. The item would be thrown at the feet of the man who wanted it. He would ignore it for a while and then give it a cursory examination, throwing it back on the ground. His peers would then examine it in greater detail and extol its virtues, while the

[6]During some feasts, the ashes of the dead are mixed with the boiled, ripe plantain soup and eaten by friends and relatives of the deceased. The feast also serves as a preliminary to a raid that involves two or more villages. The sponsor of the raid will entertain his allies in a feast the day before the raiding party departs. See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the raid.

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given would apologize for its defects. If it were a particularly poor item, just the opposite would occur; the giver would cite its not-so-obvious merits, while the recipient would draw attention to the conspicuous shortcomings. In every trade the hosts always feel as though they had been over generous, and the guests, after they depart, complain that they had not received enough. The trade was conducted in an atmosphere of efficiency, with very little argumentation. The hosts had concealed their choicest items and vigorously denied having some goods, and the guests had done likewise—sinking their prize bows in a river before arriving at feast, for example, and bringing an inferior one along to cast one of the hosts asked for it during the trading. As this was the first time in some years that the two groups feasted together, there was nothing for either one to repay. Instead, the visitors asked for items to trade—to be repaid later—and the guests did the same.

Fig. 4-2. Guests drinking boiled ripe plantain soup at a feast; the trough is made from the bark of a large tree, unpeeled.

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they were about to release their arrows point-blank at Kaobawä's attackers, but when he and his aides turned them back, the crisis was over. The leaders of the visiting group rejoined the other men, some of whom had picked up glowing brands of firewood, and they backed out of the village, weapons still drawn, their way illuminated by those who were waving the brands.[7]

Kaobawä's group took no further action in this affair and was not invited to feast at Mahekodo-teri. Later in the year, their relationships worsened because of a club fight in yet another village, and for a while both groups threatened to shoot each other on sight. A temporary rapprochement developed after the club fight, when a group of raiders from Kaobawä's group met a group of hunters from Mahekodo-teri while en route to attack the village of one of their enemies. The men from both villages traded with each other and departed on friendly terms, the raiders abandoning their raid and returning to their village lest they be later ambushed on the way home by the Mahekodo-teri. They are presently on trading terms with each other, but their relationship is still somewhat strained and potentially hostile.

In general, feasts are exciting for both the hosts and the guests and contribute to their mutual solidarity. Under normal circumstances, allies that customarily feast with each other do not fight. Nevertheless, even the best allies occasionally agree beforehand to terminate their feast with a chest-pounding duel, thereby demonstrating to each other that they are friends, but capable of maintaining their sovereignty and willing to fight if necessary (Fig. 4–4). Kaobawä's group had a chest-pounding duel with one of its staunchest allies in 1966, as each had heard that the other was spreading rumors that it was cowardly. Of the six feasts I witnessed during the nineteen months I spent with the Yanomamö, two of them ended in fighting.

Any Yanomamö feast can potentially end in violence because of the nature of the attitudes the participants hold regarding canons of behavior and obligations to display ferocity.

Still, the feast and its attendant trade serve to reduce the possibility of neighbors fighting with each other at a more serious level of violence, and they contribute to intervillage solidarity and mutual interdependence.

[7] At this time, I was crouched in the house behind the line of bowmen, trembling in my boots.